

On Orchestration and Arranging:
The Tchaikovsky Suite

A Thesis
Presented to
the Chancellor's Scholars Council
of Pembroke State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for Completion of
the Chancellor's Scholars Program

by

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November 7, 1985

The following paper addresses the steps that an arranger takes when beginning a new project. An arranger has to first research the history of the composer in order to have a better understanding of the composer's style, of the composer's feelings while composing, and perhaps his reasons for writing a particular composition. Secondly, the arranger must study the actual music to decide what instruments to use, and where to use them. Also, an arranger has to consider the level of musicians that are to perform the music. The last point that this paper addresses is the music educator as an arranger; the reasons why an educator should arrange, and the types of arrangements an educator will usually write.

I

Pyotr Ilich Tchaikovsky was born on May 7, 1840 to Ilya Petrovich and Alexandra Andreyevna Tchaikovsky. He was the second of six children, all born in the mining town of Votkinsk, Russia. His first musical effort was a song entitled "Our Mama in Petersburg", which he and his sister wrote in September, 1844.¹

Young Pyotr was a bright student in many subjects besides music. He read French and German fluently by the age of six, and his governess, a Miss Fanny Durbach, tried to steer him away from music into other intellectual pursuits.² Miss Durbach's efforts were thwarted, however, by the appearance of a piano teacher. Tchaikovsky was soon able to match his teacher in sight-reading, and surpassed her in

knowledge of music.³ Tchaikovsky was very close to his brother, Modest. Both went to the School of Jurisprudence, an institution well known (at that time) for the homosexual tendencies among its students. Tchaikovsky wrestled with the problem of his sexual preference, feeling cut off from the world of normal men and women. He often discussed his problem with his brother, and he was obsessed with overcoming his "problem". Lonely and desperately unhappy, he turned to composition for consolation and gradually, as his art grew to maturity, for a release of his frustrated personality.⁴

Tchaikovsky became a member of the Ministry of Justice and rose several ranks, but his heart was not in his job. In 1861 he wrote to his sister....

"At dinner they spoke of my musical talent...Father declared that it was not yet too late for me to become an artist. If only that were really true! But it's like this: even if I actually had any talent, it can hardly be developed now. They've made an official out of me, though a poor one; I'm doing my best to attend to my duties more conscientiously, and at the same time I'm to study thoroughbass."⁵

Tchaikovsky's love of music was strengthened by a trip to Paris, and he came home firmly resolved to begin a career in music. He was an early pupil at the brand new (1862) Conservatory set up by the Russian Musical Society, with Anton Rubenstein as director.⁶ In 1863, Tchaikovsky resigned from the Ministry of Justice, and concentrated on his studies.

In November, 1865, he was given the post of Chief Harmony Instructor at the Conservatory in Moscow. During his tenure in Moscow, Tchaikovsky continued to hone his skills as a composer, working on operas, works for orchestra, and piano. The Oprichnik, Cinderella, Romeo and Juliet, and Swan Lake were composed during this period. In April, 1874, Tchaikovsky's first real success came with the first performance of his opera, The Oprichnik, in Saint Petersburg. Even though the work was well received, Tchaikovsky was never satisfied with it.⁷

On July 18, 1877 Tchaikovsky was married to Antonia Mil-yukova. On October 6 of the same year, he was told by his doctor that renewing his relationship with his wife would result in a complete mental breakdown for the composer. Antonia refused to grant Tchaikovsky a divorce, and after having several affairs (she had children by these lovers), she was declared insane. Antonia died in an asylum in 1917.⁸

In 1878, after finishing his Symphony number four in F Minor (opus 36), Tchaikovsky longed to compose simple things. That is when he began his Children's Album (opus 39), from which the selections for this suite were made.

II

The first of these pieces, Morning Prayer, is in the key of G major, and is written in slow triple meter. It was chosen as the first movement because it contains simple, quiet harmony that lends itself well to the chorale effect desired by the arranger. Brass instruments are used exclusively in the opening phrase, with woodwinds entering only to reiterate the opening statement, then slowly dropping out after the climax,

only returning to bring the final chord to full consumation. No percussion is used in the first movement, because the arranger did not want to "clutter" the pure wind sound and the simplicity of the harmony.

The second movement is more lively than the first. Entitled Old French Song, it is in duple meter, with a dance-like feel, and oddly for such a lively piece, it is in the key of G minor. The arranger was trying to achieve an abundant woodwind sound; therefore trumpets and baritone are tacet during the second movement. Horns and trombones are used only to complement the lush clarinet sound (written in the low register) while the tuba and low woodwinds provide a sustained bass. Percussion is used sparingly, only as an aid to articulation, and during the flute solo in the middle section, the only percussion instruments used are the triangle and a suspended cymbal played with soft mallets. After the solo, the rest of the band returns in a Maestoso tempo, for a recapitulation of the opening motif.

The third movement, German Song is slower in tempo than the second movement, and is in triple meter. The arranger decided to place emphasis on the clarinet and tuba parts, because these two instruments add a true German "flavor" to the composition. Written in the key of E-flat major, this particular movement is easily transcribed for wind instruments because the natural keys of the wind instruments are the flat keys. Also in the third movement, the orchestra bells are used in the percussion section for the first time in this composition.

The fourth movement, Italian Song, is in the key of D major, and utilizes compound triple meter ($\frac{3}{8}$). The tempo marking of Allegretto makes this the fastest of all the movements, so therefore it is a natural finale. The emphasis is placed on the trumpet section, with a trumpet duet and a trumpet solo included. The bass line is kept staccato, so as to add a feeling of lightness or "bounce", and quartal harmony is utilized to enhance the Italian spirit of the movement.

After completing his Children's Album, Tchaikovsky completed six operas, two ballets (Sleeping Beauty and The Nutcracker), numerous incidental dramatic compositions, cantatas, hymns and secular songs, including a lost composition entitled Spring, written for female chorus.⁹ He also composed one string sextet after 1878, and nine other piano works. Tchaikovsky also composed nine vocal collections, and sixteen orchestral compositions, including his Symphonies numbers Five and Six, a symphony entitled Manfred, three suites, the famous Ceremonial Overture, 1812, and a suite from The Nutcracker.¹⁰

After the completion of his Sixth Symphony (Pathetic) in B minor in 1893, Tchaikovsky was very worried. His ever present "curse" of homosexuality was threatening to destroy him, yet again. The mother of one of his paramours was blackmailing Tchaikovsky, threatening to expose the relationship. At this time in Russia, and Tchaikovsky, being very upset by this woman's actions, purposely drank unboiled water. After a battle with cholera, Tchaikovsky died on November 6, 1893.¹¹

III

Tchaikovsky, in addition to being a prolific composer, was an excellent arranger. There are several basic points to consider when one starts to arrange (or score) for band. First, what instrumentation will work best with the music being used? Compositional devices that work well with piano may or may not work well with a wind band.¹² With a piano, the strings continue to vibrate and the sound decays after the key is struck. Also, the strings of the piano produce an overtone series through sympathetic vibrations. With wind instruments, there is no sound decay, because after the column of air is stopped, the sound immediately ceases. Sympathetic vibrations are impossible. So, some chord structures, especially in the bass line will not be clear with a wind band, but will be clear on piano. Ornaments that are beautiful on flute will be stilted on piano. The wind band gives a blend of tonal colors and textures that the piano is incapable of. However, this creates a problem when the arranger attempts to place all the instruments in their correct ranges and use chord inversions to help the piece retain its original character.¹³

The correct placement of the wind instruments is achieved by looking at the instruments and simply using common sense as to where they belong in the chord. High woodwinds are usually written in quartal harmony, to help spread the chord. Piccolo can be used to "frame" the melody (orchestra bells may also be used in this capacity), or a different obligato melody may be written. The second flute part is usually doubled by the first oboe, and the second oboe usually doubles the first flute part

an octave lower, or the second oboe is used to completely fill out the chord. The clarinets are written in complete chords, as well as the saxophones, with the baritone saxophone doubling the bass line. The bass clarinet should also double the bass part. The first trumpet (as well as the first clarinet) usually carries the melody line, with the second and the third parts playing a complementary harmony to the melody line.

French Horns and baritones (euphoniums) are relied upon for a counter melody when it is appropriate. These are the middle range, or background, instruments, and they can be used almost anywhere, taking over the melody line, blending with the woodwind section, or, as stated earlier, providing a counter melody. French horns are used quite extensively with the woodwinds, and are considered to be the fifth member of the woodwind quintet. Baritones can play in the same range as a trumpet, but they have a much mellower sound, and they also lack the carrying power of the trumpet.

Trombones are extremely versatile instruments, like the french horn and baritone. They usually play the tenor line, but can also be used to provide melodic and counter-melodic passages. The bassoon doubles the first trombone, except in the instance of a solo passage. The tuba invariably is given the bass line. It, along with the bass clarinet, baritone saxophone and sometimes string bass, provides a means of support for the entire band.

Percussion instruments place a wide range of timbres at the arranger's disposal. Soft and low, or bright, brittle and harsh, percussion can offer excitement, or build a feeling of

anxiety. Many instruments are used in addition to the basic snare and bass drum. Cymbals (suspended and crash), bells, xylophone, vibraphone, and marimba parts are standard, as well as field drums, timbali, sleigh bells, conga and bongo drums, different sizes of triangles (with different size beaters), temple blocks, claves, woodblocks, cowbells, vibraharp, tambourine, guiro, chimes, gongs, tam-tams, and even automobile brake drums are used. Tape recorders, whistles, and even different water levels in glasses can be used in the percussion section.¹⁴

The next item that an arranger needs to consider is what level of difficulty should the piece be? The arranger should either have a specific band in mind when arranging a composition (and plan the instrumentation accordingly), or at least have a category of wind ensemble, such as junior high level, senior high level, brass band, ecetera. Then the arranger plans the instrumentation and level of difficulty to fit the level of musicians. This particular arrangement is easy enough for an advanced junior high school band, or for a senior high band. Since no particular band is used as a model for this arrangement, the instrumentation is fairly standard. The arranger has decided to use two flute parts, two oboes, three clarinets, one bass clarinet, one alto saxophone, one tenor saxophone, one baritone saxophone, and one bassoon. Also, three trumpets, four french horns, three trombones, one baritone and one tuba are used. The percussion parts are very basic, using only snare and bass drum for the most part, with suspended and crash cymbals, and orchestra bells in the second and third movements.

Two timpani are used, so that schools without extensive percussion equipment can still play the arrangement. Many arrangements cannot be used in secondary education simply because the percussion parts call for instruments that are not available (marimbas, vibraphones and xylophones are very expensive), or because the parts demand more percussionists than the normal school band program has. The key to success in writing percussion parts is to make it easily playable by four or five people. If an extensive auxiliary percussion part is unavoidable, then it is an excellent idea to make the parts playable by personnel other than percussionists. For example, a tambourine or maracas part could be played by a trumpeter who is counting rests through a certain passage. This allows the students to have a variety of musical experiences instead of only learning to play one instrument.

A new trend in contemporary music is to have the instrumentalists talk, whistle, sing, snap or otherwise make noise during the performance. As an arranger for young bands, this should be avoided, unless the group is very mature (musically speaking). Junior high students would find it very difficult to concentrate if they were asked (by the arranger) to do anything other than play their instruments. Even a high school band would have to be made up of very serious students to be able to maintain the high level of concentration needed to perform a piece of literature that utilizes these modern devices.

IV

If the arranger and the educator are the same person, the extent of the arranging done will be very simple. The alma mater, the fight song, or maybe a small change in an existing arrangement. Such arrangements should be as simple as possible, and should ideally be playable after only one rehearsal, since most arranging that is done by educators is for emergency use. In an educational setting, time is of the essence. Wasted rehearsal time is lost forever, and if the arrangement is too difficult, then it defeats its own purpose and only serves to frustrate the students. A simple, playable chart, written in a comfortable range, gives a feeling of accomplishment to the students, and adds a personal touch to the band repertoire. However, not all educators find it necessary to do their own arranging. Many music educators do not feel competent enough, or just simply do not have the extra time needed to devote to arranging. Even if the educator has an interest in arranging, only small arrangements should be attempted, because of the extensive time demands on the music educator. Also, most printed arrangements are satisfactory for secondary school use. The band director does not have to arrange music, but there are many who choose to arrange, and for many reasons. Perhaps they have a particular student that they wish to feature, they need an arrangement on-the-spot and cannot buy one or they are unhappy with an existing arrangement and wish to change it. Another reason to arrange a composition is to bring an added dimension to a piece of music, as is the case with The Tchaikovsky Suite. The arranger has great respect for the

composer, and thought that the four pieces, Morning Prayer, Old French Song, German Song, and Italian Song would sound lovely if played by a wind band. If there is a most important reason for arranging a piece of music, then it is for the joy that music gives to composer, arranger, conductor, musicians, and most importantly, the audience.

Footnotes

- ¹Warrack, John. Tchaikovsky; England, Charles Scribners':
Copyright 1972. page 23.
- ²Warrack, John: pages 23-24.
- ³Warrack, John: page 25.
- ⁴Warrack, John: page 30.
- ⁵Warrack, John: page 34.
- ⁶Warrack, John: page 37.
- ⁷Warrack, John: page 63.
- ⁸Warrack, John: pages 118-120.
- ⁹Warrack, John: pages 271-273.
- ¹⁰Warrack, John: pages 273-278.
- ¹¹Warrack, John: pages 265-270.
- ¹²Wagner, Joseph. Band Scoring; New York, Mc Graw-Hill Book
Company: Copyright 1960. Pages 263-264.
- ¹³Jacob, Gordon. The Elements of Orchestration; Connecticut,
Greenwood Press: Copyright 1962. page 73.
- ¹⁴Combs, Michael F. Percussion Manual; California, Wadsworth
Publishing Company, Incorporated:
Copyright 1977. pages 109-119.

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- Combs, Michael F. Percussion Manual; California, Wadsworth Publishing Company, Incorporated: Copyright 1977.
- Jacob, Gordon The Elements Of Orchestration; Connecticut, Greenwood Press: Copyright 1962.
- Wagner, Joseph Band Scoring; New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company: Copyright 1960.
- Warrack, John Tchaikovsky; England, Charles Scribners: Copyright 1972.

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto
clar.

bass
clar.

bsn.

alto

saxophones
tenor

bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

timp.

perc.

The Tchaikovsky Suite

I. Morning Prayer

II. Old French Song

III. German Song

IV. Italian Song

A Project

Presented to the Chancellor's Scholars Council

*as partial fulfillment
of the Requirements for Completion of
The Chancellor's Scholars Program
of Pembroke State University*

by

Eugenia J. Johnson

November 15, 1985

Andante

I. MORNING PRAYER

page 1

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto

tenor

bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

timp.

perc.

TACET

TACET

1 2 3 4 5

page 2

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto
tenor
bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

timp.

perc.

TACET

TACET

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto
tenor
bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

timp.

perc.

TACET

TACET

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto

tenor

bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

timp.

perc.

mf

p.

TACET

16 17 18 19 20

21 22 23 24

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto

tenor

bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

timp.

perc.

dim.

pp

TACET

TACET

page 6

52

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto

tenor

bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

timp.

perc.

11 12 13 14 15

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto

tenor

bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

timp.

perc.

TACET

TACET

TACET

TACET

16 17 18 19 20

picc.

fl. *SOLO*

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto

tenor

bari.

tpt. *TACET*

cor. *TACET*

hrn. *1st only*

trb.

bar. *TACET*

tuba

timp.

perc. *Tm. + Snr. Cymbal - both mallets*

[illegible]

26 27 28 29 30

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto
tenor
bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

timp.

perc.

Casa Cimballo

TACET

TACET

TACET

31 32 33

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto

tenor

bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

timp.

perc.

52

III. GERMAN SONG

page 13

MODERATO

1 2 3 4 5

picc.

fl. *mf*

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar. *mf*

alto clar.

bass clar. *mf*

bsn.

saxophones
alto *mf*
tenor
bari.

tpt. *mf*

cor.

hrn. *mf*

trb. *mf*

bar. *mf*

tuba

Bells

perc. *mf*

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto

tenor

bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

Bells

perc.

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto
tenor
bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

Bells

perc.

1. 17 2. 18 19 20

picc.

fl. *Play 1st x*

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar. *Solo*
mf

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn. *mf*

saxophones
alto *mf*
tenor
bari.

tpt. *mf*

cor.

hrn.

trb. *mf*

bar. *mf*

tuba

bells *mf*

perc. *mf*

picc.
fl.
ob.
E^b clar.
B^b clar.
alto clar.
bass clar.
bsn.
alto saxophones
tenor saxophones
bari.
tpt.
cor.
hrn.
trb.
bar.
tuba
Bells
perc.

26

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto

tenor

bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

Bells

perc.

IV. ITALIAN SONG

page 19

ALLEGRETTO

	1	2	3	4	5
picc.					
fl.					
ob.					
E ^b clar.					
B ^b clar.					
alto clar.					
bass clar.					
bsn.					
alto saxophones					
tenor saxophones					
bari.					
tpt.					
cor.					
hrn.					
trb.					
bar.					
tuba					
timp.	TACET				
perc.					

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto
tenor
bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

timp.

perc.

TACET

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto

tenor

bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

timp.

perc.

TACET

11 12 13 14 15

BAY MUSIC PAPER CO.

21 22 23 24 25

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto
tenor
bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

timp.

perc.

TACET

picc. 26 27 28 29 30

fl. *mf*

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar. *mf*

bsn.

saxophones
alto

tenor

bari.

tpt. *mf*

cor.

hrn.

trb. *mf*

bar.

tuba *mf*

timp. TACET

perc.

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto
tenor
bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

timp.

perc.

36 37 38 39 40

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto
tenor
bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

timp.

perc.

The musical score for page 26, measures 36-40, is as follows:

- Measure 36:** Picc. (rest), Fl. (quarter note G4), Ob. (quarter note G4), E^b clar. (quarter note G4), B^b clar. (quarter note G4), Alto clar. (rest), Bass clar. (quarter note G4), Bsn. (quarter note G4), Saxophones (Alto: quarter note G4, Tenor: quarter note G4, Baritone: quarter note G4), Tpt. (quarter note G4), Cor. (quarter note G4), Hrn. (quarter note G4), Trb. (quarter note G4), Bar. (quarter note G4), Tuba (quarter note G4), Timp. (TACET), Perc. (quarter note G4).
- Measure 37:** Picc. (rest), Fl. (quarter note A4), Ob. (quarter note A4), E^b clar. (quarter note A4), B^b clar. (quarter note A4), Alto clar. (rest), Bass clar. (quarter note A4), Bsn. (quarter note A4), Saxophones (Alto: quarter note A4, Tenor: quarter note A4, Baritone: quarter note A4), Tpt. (quarter note A4), Cor. (quarter note A4), Hrn. (quarter note A4), Trb. (quarter note A4), Bar. (quarter note A4), Tuba (quarter note A4), Timp. (TACET), Perc. (quarter note A4).
- Measure 38:** Picc. (rest), Fl. (quarter note B4), Ob. (quarter note B4), E^b clar. (quarter note B4), B^b clar. (quarter note B4), Alto clar. (rest), Bass clar. (quarter note B4), Bsn. (quarter note B4), Saxophones (Alto: quarter note B4, Tenor: quarter note B4, Baritone: quarter note B4), Tpt. (quarter note B4), Cor. (quarter note B4), Hrn. (quarter note B4), Trb. (quarter note B4), Bar. (quarter note B4), Tuba (quarter note B4), Timp. (TACET), Perc. (quarter note B4).
- Measure 39:** Picc. (rest), Fl. (quarter note C5), Ob. (quarter note C5), E^b clar. (quarter note C5), B^b clar. (quarter note C5), Alto clar. (rest), Bass clar. (quarter note C5), Bsn. (quarter note C5), Saxophones (Alto: quarter note C5, Tenor: quarter note C5, Baritone: quarter note C5), Tpt. (quarter note C5), Cor. (quarter note C5), Hrn. (quarter note C5), Trb. (quarter note C5), Bar. (quarter note C5), Tuba (quarter note C5), Timp. (TACET), Perc. (quarter note C5).
- Measure 40:** Picc. (rest), Fl. (quarter note D5), Ob. (quarter note D5), E^b clar. (quarter note D5), B^b clar. (quarter note D5), Alto clar. (rest), Bass clar. (quarter note D5), Bsn. (quarter note D5), Saxophones (Alto: quarter note D5, Tenor: quarter note D5, Baritone: quarter note D5), Tpt. (quarter note D5), Cor. (quarter note D5), Hrn. (quarter note D5), Trb. (quarter note D5), Bar. (quarter note D5), Tuba (quarter note D5), Timp. (TACET), Perc. (quarter note D5).

46 47 48 49

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto
tenor
bari.

lpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

timp.

perc.

TACE

picc.

fl.

ob.

E^b clar.

B^b clar.

alto clar.

bass clar.

bsn.

saxophones
alto

tenor

bari.

tpt.

cor.

hrn.

trb.

bar.

tuba

timp.

perc.